

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I will explain this to you later. It's very complicated. I reject the notion that just because a team calls itself after a big geographical area that I have to reform. I live in Connecticut, just because they call themselves the New England Patriots, but that's for another time.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We should have a hearing on that.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Let me give you a quote that comes from one of these hearings and you decide, we will let the public decide and our colleagues decide whether or not this is good information that maybe we should have out there.

David Kessler, who is the former FDA official and one of the acknowledged experts on food safety in this country, Kessler says, "We have no structure," in this country, "for preventing food-borne illness. The reality is that there is currently no mandate, no leadership, no resources, nor scientific research base for prevention of food safety problems."

I think that's probably information that we should know, that one of the leading officials, one of the leading experts on food safety and food regulation in this country believes that we have absolutely no ability to control the quality of food coming into this country.

He knows what we know, the amount of inspections has dropped precipitously. We did about 50,000 food inspections in 1972. We do 5,000 now in 2000. We have dropped by 90 percent over the last 30 years the amount of food inspections we do.

We have these experts out there who had these opinions that they couldn't share because Congress wasn't doing oversight. Congress wasn't bringing before it the people who knew what was going on out there, knew the risk that the American public was being put at, they weren't being asked to come here and express those opinions to Congress. We are getting them now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are getting them now, and, of course, it's important to recognize that you probably can't monitor every piece of corn that's coming into the country or every product that's coming into the country. But what happens is if you do have a significant presence, one is in random inspections, there will be a general consensus among people shipping food into your country that there will be inspections, and they may get caught if they do not keep meeting the standards.

But at the same exact time, what this does here is if people are getting busted for sending food in from China, then all of a sudden you are going to see production increases here in the United States, whether it's toys being manufactured or maybe something else. So it's very important.

This is about safety. This is about protecting our kids. This is about making sure that our families have, when

they are having Thanksgiving dinner, have a lot of knowledge and confidence in how the government is administering these programs.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Now that we are starting to shed some light on what's going on out there, the charts that you put up about the amount of imports into this country for unsafe toys and the incredibly quick decline and the amount of people that are charged with inspecting those toys, I mean, that's out there now. You would think that now that we finally shed some sunlight on the issue of unsafe toys and unsafe food and the number of people that are at risk and the problems with our current regulatory processes, that we could all come together and work on this now.

But what happens? Yet more obstinacy from this administration, yet more closing of their eyes and their ears to this problem. The Senate and the House are both working on reform pieces of legislation that will give new powers, new duties and new resources to these commissions, in particular to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

That same director that we are talking about, the person that runs the Consumer Product Safety Commission, came and testified before Congress that she doesn't want any more powers. She doesn't want any more protection that she can afford the consumers, that she would rather see the status quo, effectively, is what her testimony is. Even now that the American public has awoken to this problem, that this Congress finally is talking about it, we still have an administration that says, I don't want to do anything more. I don't want any more power. I don't want any more resources. I just want things to be as they are. I want to close my eyes and my ears and hope the problem goes away. That can't be how we do things going forward.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I want to put this in perspective. I would like to bring this down to the level of the average family and what they are consuming when we are talking about some of these recalls with regard to food safety, and so people can understand at home what we are talking about.

I have a list in front of me, and I won't read through it all, because it's an incredibly long list, unfortunately, the recalls that have taken place just this year. Just this year. We are at the end of October, the last day of October, today.

But a couple of the big ones that stand out, I am sure everybody remembers back in February the peanut butter recall due to salmonella contamination, huge issue, people were sickened all across the country. The level of that recall, 326 million pounds of peanut butter across the country, and that, primarily, would affect children, children eating their peanut butter.

We had a 55,000 cantaloupe recall. Now, that came from Costa Rica, be-

cause of salmonella, just to show you how across the board this is. We had 9.5 million bottles of Listerine that were recalled due to a microbial contamination, and that was in April.

Throughout this list, month after month, there are multiple recalls involving millions of pounds of ground beef for a variety of illnesses that it caused, so ground beef, and from a number of different countries that we are talking about importing.

We have food recalls involving apple juice, 113,000 units of apple juice were recalled in August.

Then, lastly, everything up through pot pies, we just had this month, they were recalling pot pies due to salmonella contamination. So when we talk about 1 percent of the food imports into this country are inspected, it affects our entire food supply. Yes, this is a health issue, but this is also a national security issue. That's why we are having some of these hearings that we are talking about.

□ 2100

And I'm very grateful that we have been joined by the distinguished colleague of ours from Florida, Miami, Mr. KENDRICK MEEK; and I would, at this time, yield to him.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Mr. ALTMIRE. I was very pleased to have had the first half of this hour to trick-or-treat with my kids. We had a great time. And my daughter was some very scary—I don't know what her, she couldn't quite explain to me what she was, but I asked what, I mean, What are you? She said, I'm your daughter. So that was like, okay, I won't ask any more questions. My son was a Secret Service Agent, so I was well protected.

Let me just say, gentlemen, and I think it's important for the Members to pay very close attention to what we've shared with them, and I'm so glad that we are heading towards safer toys, safer food, safer medicine. Too many times in the news we hear about how loose we are with other countries being able to not have standards and quality control in place, and it ends up affecting everyday Americans, and it disrupts business. We have rumors about things being unsafe, and it's making Americans feel more uneasy about it. And Mr. ALTMIRE, I'm not one to make a, you know, start fire alarms and carrying on and scaring people, but it is pretty scary, the fact that we do have, in some cases, as it relates to those that certify the toys that can come in and out the United States of America as relates to safety and setting requirements for children, it's just one person running that office. And we're the biggest democracy or one of the superpowers of the world, one of the biggest democracies. And I think it's important that we shed light on this. The people count on this Congress to govern. I think the reason why it hasn't happened to this point, of the cozy relationship that the previous